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ABSTRACT

The inability of students to become involved with writing assignments in two high-school sophomore honors classes was addressed at a writer's workshop by the implementation of collaborative learning, peer evaluation, conferencing, and broadened literature selection. Students responded to pre-workshop and post-workshop surveys to assess individual attitudes toward learning to write and writing abilities. Students were allowed to complete assignments in collaborative groups. Students were also allowed to choose the literature to be studied by the group. Results indicated increased interest in writing among the target group. Additionally, students in the target group demonstrated improved writing performance on the final writing project. Findings suggest that increased student participation in the selection of writing assignments and literature selections, along with interaction with peers on assignments, brought about improved performance on class writing assignments. (Twenty-six references and teacher and student survey instruments are attached.) (RS)

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A MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR REFOCUSING STUDENT WRITING THROUGH PERSONALIZATION AND COOPERATIVE LEARNING

by

Deborah A. McFarland

A Practicum Report

Submitted to the Faculty of the Center for Advancement of Education of Nova University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science.

The abstract of this report may be placed in a National Database System for reference.

June 1993

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ABSTRACT

A Management System For Refocusing Student Writing Through Personalization and Cooperative Learning
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Descriptors: Secondary Education/ Peer Evaluation/ Critical Thinking/ Composition/ Conferencing/ English Curriculum/ Collaborative Learning/ Cooperative Learning

The inability of students to become involved with writing assignments in two sophomore honors class was addressed by the implementation of collaborative learning, peer evaluation, conferencing, and broadened literature selection. These were incorporated through a writer's workshop. Students responded to pre-workshop and post-workshop surveys to assess individual attitudes toward learning to write and writing abilities. Students were allowed to complete assignments in collaborative groups. Students were also allowed to choose the literature to be studied by the group.

The results indicated increased interest in writing among the target group. Additionally, students in the target group demonstrated improved writing performance on the final writing project. It was concluded that increased student participation in the selection of writing assignments and literature selections, along with interaction with peers on assignments, brought about improved performance on class writing assignments. Appendices include a teacher survey, a beginning student survey, and a final student survey.

Appendix S

Authorship Statement/Document release

Authorship Statement

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. Where it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other workers in the field and in the hope that my work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

Robert A. McFarlane
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CHAPTER I

PURPOSE

Background

The setting for this practicum project was a suburban comprehensive high school serving tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades. The school was located in the third largest school district in a southern state. The total student population was 1876. Fifty-seven percent of these students, or 1061, were White. Thirteen percent of these students, or 236, were African-American. The Hispanic student population, 522, totaled 28 percent while three percent of the student enrollment, 55, were Asians. Indian students comprised one tenth of one percent of the student population.

The physical plant had gradually expanded since the school's opening in 1967. At its opening, the physical plant consisted of a two story edifice with a gymnasium and an auditorium. The original structure had doubled in size and a separate structure housed driver's education and special education. A separate media center and a third wing had also been constructed.

The total professional staff at this school numbered 163. Of this number, 112 were full-time teachers. Six were administrators, and 45 were support staff. The staff was comprised of 39 White males and 82 White females. Five staff members were African-American males and 15 were African-American females. Eleven staff members were Hispanic males and 21 were Hispanic females. One staff member was American Indian.

The staff at this school was comprised of 12 members with three or fewer years experience. Twenty staff members had between four and nine years experience. Those staff members having 10 to 19 years experience numbered 41 while 39 had twenty or more years experience.

Forty-four percent of the staff had earned bachelor's degrees. Those staff members with master's degrees comprised 54 percent of the total staff. Almost three percent of the staff had earned specialists degrees.

The ratio of pupils per teacher at this setting was 17 to one. The ratio of pupils to media specialists was

625 to one. The student-administrator ratio was 313 to one while the instructional staff to administrator ratio was 21 to one.

For this setting, three percent of the student population, or 57 students, were classified as dropouts before the end of the 1991-92 school year. Twenty-four White males and nine White females were classified as dropouts. Eight African-American males and two African-American females were classified as dropouts. Seven Hispanic males and four Hispanic females were included in the dropout totals, while two Asian males and one Asian female were included.

This setting offered challenging programs as a part of the programs. A student could take more than one of these courses. Advanced placement and dual enrollment courses, community college courses offered for high school students, were offered along with job preparation programs. Sixty-three students completed at least one advanced placement course during the 1991-92 school year. Of this number 14 were White males and 25 were White females. Four of this number were Hispanic males and 13 were Hispanic females. Two of these students were Asian males and three were Asian females, while one African-

American male and one African-American female were included. No students were enrolled in dual enrollment classes during this school year.

Two hundred fifty-seven students completed a vocational program during the 1991-92 school year. Of this number 71 were White males, 86 White females, 14 African-American males, 17 African-American females, 27 Hispanic males, 37 Hispanic females, three Asian males and two Asian females.

Many students who graduated from this school in 1990 intended to enter a degree program and had taken college preparatory placement tests in writing and reading. In the area of reading, the percentage of students ready for college courses included 78.57 percent White males and 77.78 percent White females. One hundred percent of African-American males and females demonstrated readiness. Eighty percent of Hispanic males and 61 percent of Hispanic females demonstrated readiness. No Asian males were included in this number, but 100 percent Asian females showed readiness for college reading. The percentages for writing readiness revealed 75 percent of White males were ready for college writing, while 69 percent of White females were ready. One hundred percent

of African-American males and females demonstrated readiness for college writing along with 100 percent of Asian females. Hispanic males in this category made up 40 percent, while the females comprised 66.67 percent.

For this setting many students took either the ACT (American College Test) or the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) in 1990-91. Eighty-two students took the ACT during this time period while 196 students took the SAT. The median ACT score in this school was 21. The median SAT score was 880.

The author of this proposal had been a teacher in this district for 24 years. Seventeen of those years had been spent at this setting. Ten of those 17 years had been spent teaching English, while seven were spent as a media specialist. Prior to this assignment the writer had spent one year in an elementary school and six years in junior high schools. During the practicum implementation period, the author worked with 120 sophomore students in five separate classes. Two of these classes were regular classes, two were honors classes, and one was a skills class. The author also served as sophomore level chairperson.

^Problem Statement

The honors courses taught by the author had a total of 57 students between two classes. The honors curriculum was a demanding one that required students be proficient in close critical reading, critical thinking, and expository writing. Previously, the curriculum did not leave much room for creative writing, modeling, or independent examination and exposition of varied literature. Even though the relaxation of state mandates had created more flexibility in the curriculum, students were not involved in their writing. This writer believed that this situation existed because students were not routinely allowed to have input into what writing topics would be, nor were students allowed to express ideas in formats other than the essay format. As a result, student writings were uninspired, lifeless attempts to say what the teacher wanted to read with little evidence of critical thinking being found in this writing. For the most part, students wanted to paraphrase what had been discussed in class.

The writing assignments completed by students in the sophomore honors classes at this site revealed a lack of involvement with the literature. Neither did these

assignments reveal any critical thinking about the works read. Students seemed unable to isolate specific information in the literature for use as support for main ideas.

The reading resource teacher at this site had emphasized the need to teach critical thinking skills. At one recent faculty meeting, the existence of higher level thinking skills on future HSCT (High School Competency Test) in this state was discussed. However, most of what happens in the classroom required nothing more than recall. Responses to a survey (Appendix A:65) of the teachers in the English department at this school indicated dissatisfaction with the ability of students to think critically. Eight percent indicated satisfaction, while 33.3 percent indicated some dissatisfaction and 58.3 percent were dissatisfied.

These teachers also agreed that the need existed to encourage better writing; yet this revitalization need not be a cumbersome task. On a survey (Appendix B:67) of students 35 percent indicated much interest in learning to write, while 48 percent indicated some interest and eight percent were not at all interested. When asked how students felt about the writing assignments completed

this year, 19 percent found nothing in the literature that was worthy of composition response. Twenty seven percent indicated great interest and felt that the purpose of the assignments was understood. Fifty-four percent wanted to do a good job but were not sure how to go about doing so. In addition, when asked to indicate how the writing portion of the curriculum could be improved, 79 percent preferred through more group work, 73 percent preferred more student choice about writing material, 27 percent wanted more sharing of writing assignments, and 25 percent wanted more peer evaluation. Finally, when asked about the importance of learning to write, 58 percent indicated that this was very important, 40 percent indicated somewhat important, and 20 percent thought writing a total waste of time.

The author noted a disturbing trend in papers submitted during the first semester. Students' grades reflected an inability to gather details for use in development. On papers for which the rough drafts were evaluated by the author, the percentage of students making quality grades (A's or B's) was high. For example, writing assignments three and four (rough drafts and final copies) reflected 73 percent A's or B's, 17

percent C's and 10 percent D's or F's. The rough drafts for this assignment on using specific details were evaluated by the author and returned to students with corrections and comments. Writing assignment one, however, the rough draft for which was not graded by the instructor, reflected grades of 12.5 percent A's or B's, 34 percent C's and 50 percent D's or F's. Another assignment for which the rough drafts were evaluated and returned was one asking students to write about the theme of a short story. On this assignment 86 percent of the students received A's or B's, while 14 percent received C's with no grade lower. The most successful of the assignments was one for which students could choose personal topics. Ninety-two percent of students received A's or B's, while eight percent received C's.

The problem was reflected most clearly on assignments which required students to think about literature and isolate specific details. Fifty percent of students received A's or B's on a writing assignment on A Separate Peace for which critical thinking, critical reading, and selection of appropriate details were required. Forty-three percent received C's, and seven percent received D's or F's. Similarly, when asked to

discuss the tragic hero of Antigone using specific details from the play for support, only 41 percent of students received A's or B's, with 45 percent receiving C's and 14 percent receiving D's or F's.

Finally, students were asked to discuss the common theme found in Langston Hughes' "A Dream Deferred", an excerpt from Studs Terkel's Race, and an excerpt from Ralph Ellison's The Invisible Man. These assignments were holistically graded on a six point rubric. Of the 39 responses received, only one, or three percent, was judged a six, which means that the paper was an excellent composition with an adequate response to the prompt with full development of the directions without passages of narration or description and appropriate specific details. Additionally, only one more was judged a five, a very good composition, with appropriate response to the prompt but not carefully introduced, full development and appropriate details. Twenty-one percent of the papers evaluated were judged fours. These compositions were good but did not clearly respond to the prompt throughout. They also were marred by some narration or description rather than appropriate use of specific details. The use of details was sufficient but not

always appropriate. One-third of the papers evaluated, 33 percent, were judged three's. This reflected the adequacy of the composition but without consistent clarity and use of passages of narration or description with few details which contribute to the explanation. A disturbing 41 percent, sixteen compositions, were evaluated two's or barely adequate compositions. These papers lacked clarity and adequate development and included few or no details which contributed to the explanation.

An evaluation form was attached to each assignment after it was evaluated and addressed the incorporation of specific details and logically relating these details in student writing. The holistic six-point rubric listed specifically what each composition must include to be judged at each point along the scale .

According to this county's guidelines all students in the sophomore honors class should have been making either A's or B's on writing assignments. Only 62 percent of the students in the sophomore honors class earned A's or B's. The discrepancy between what was and what should have been was 38 percent. A program to overcome composition problems was implemented.

Outcome Objectives

The students who were enrolled in the two classes which would be involved in this project were not involved in writing. The situation existed because students were not allowed to have input into what writing topics would be. Neither were students allowed to express ideas in formats other than the essay format. As a result, writings were uninspired, lifeless attempts to say what the teacher wanted said. Little evidence of critical thinking could be found in these students' writing. For the most part, students only wanted to paraphrase what had been discussed in class. None of "Themselves" was evidenced in their writings.

In order to solve this problem, a writer's workshop environment would be established in the classroom. This workshop would utilize cooperative learning techniques and peer evaluation in order to involve students with the writing of others. For further evaluation, student-teacher conferencing would be incorporated. An emphasis would be placed on developing critical thinking skills among the students. Developing argumentative skills would be utilized to focus on this area. Students were involved in the selection of and creation of topics for

writing assignments. All students kept a portfolio in which all writings were housed. For final evaluation, students chose what they considered their best efforts for conference evaluation.

The following outcome objectives were developed:

After 12 weeks of practice in applying critical thinking skills, 80 percent of the target group would improve their ability to read an unfamiliar document and respond appropriately to questions included on a checklist for analyzing critical thinking abilities. A minimum grade of 75 percent on this final assignment indicated mastery.

After 12 weeks of writing practice 80 percent of the target group of sophomore honors English students improved the quality of their writing as evidenced by self, peer and teacher evaluation using logs, records, checklists, and writing evaluation sheets which focus on content, organization, and other specific criteria, e.g., dialogue, character development, etc. A minimum averaged grade of 75 percent on all writing assignments during the practicum period indicated mastery.

Over the 12 weeks period, 60 percent of the target group of sophomore honors English students demonstrated

a 30 percent improvement in attitude toward writing as measured by differences in students' responses to the final student survey. These responses were compared to the responses to the beginning student survey in order to determine accomplishment of the goal.

After 12 weeks, 50 percent of the target group of sophomore honors English students would demonstrate a 30 percent improvement in ability to support arguments as measured by ability to provide appropriate supporting details. A 75 percent improvement as indicated on the section of the evaluation checklists used to evaluate inclusion of specific details indicated mastery.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH AND SOLUTION STRATEGY

This section of this paper investigated the relationship between involving students in the process of teaching writing and measurable improvement in the students' abilities to compose. Some research relevant to this topic was reviewed in this section. The major areas covered in this section of the proposal were (a) collaborative learning and critical thinking, (b) evaluation methods as teaching tools, (c) developing argumentative skills to improve writing, (d) ownership and audience awareness as tools of improvement, and (e) peer evaluation as a writing tool.

In recent years the teaching of composition has become the subject of renewed interest. In fact, Graves, (1981) asserts that a "renaissance" is precisely what composition as an academic subject is experiencing and, indeed, had been experiencing for the past 20 years or so. A plethora of research makes it increasingly clear that skills in written communication should be among the

highest priorities in public education. Current professional literature abounds with ideas for teaching writing and with activities designed to help teachers accomplish a variety of purposes.

Recent research also indicated that the process of writing and revising have been found to enhance the learning of content. The act of writing about course content enables students to understand and remember content longer, according to Clark (1984). Clark (1984) also asserts that analytic reasoning will not develop unless learners encounter an environment that demands analytical reasoning. Clark (1984) writes that composition assignments which require students to think can provide a very efficient environment for developing reasoning skills.

Draper (1989) writes that in response to any sort of dissatisfaction with writing, students seek to be told what to write and how to write it. Many are satisfied to write in whatever ways the instructors name in order to earn a good grade. In this manner, students avoid the responsibility of struggling with original ideas and of making and expressing meanings.

Maimon (1988) asserts that educators must nurture student writers and allow writing growth. Current research indicated that there is a need to change the way writing is taught in order to foster this growth. Rather than responding to grammatical errors and essay structure, teachers must be retrained to consider what might encourage rather than discourage writing. Maimon (1988) further suggests that teachers of English design classrooms to foster a change in student writing. This redesigning should foster the integration of writing with learning. Students should be writing more and teachers should be grading less.

Collaborative Learning and Critical Thinking

Works included in professional journals of English and writing indicate that critical thinking skills must be taught effectively through literature analysis. DeBruyn (1989) writes that teachers need to have as a goal the movement of students from the knowledge-comprehension-application level to the analysis-synthesis-evaluation level. According to Johnson (1986), higher reasoning strategies that are needed for increasing higher thinking skills are promoted by cooperative learning. Allen (1986) made use of

collaborative learning to enhance students' thinking skill through the study of literature. Students were grouped and collaborated orally. Allen asserts that this accomplished the critical analysis of literature and developed interpretations of literary texts. Additionally, this encouraged justification of interpretations using logic and textual evidence.

Duin (1984) writes that some 800 studies indicate that students who learn via cooperative learning groups (as compared to competitive or individualistic learning) achieve more; are more positive about school, subject areas, and teachers; are more positive about each other, regardless of ability, ethnic background, etc. Cooperative learning emphasizes the cognitive approach to learning where students actually discover knowledge, gain insight into problems, organize and process information, and direct learning. Magid (1988) writes that the impact of cooperative learning in a regular classroom reveals that students who interact with peers are better able to cope with the material covered in the classroom.

In further support of collaborative learning, Butler (1988) writes that collaborative writing creates writers committed to helping and supporting each other because

writing has a clearly understood sense of purpose. The immediacy of the group experience in the reading of each other's stories provides the writer with a genuine audience. Butler writes that the purpose of teaching writing should be to create skilled writers who revise in an attempt to understand ideas, not to correct surface mistakes. Further, the purpose of collaborative writing is to help students become skilled in formulating activities and assignments. Writers can achieve this skill against a background of response that is not limited to the usual response-writing-response, leading to correction and grading. Butler (1988) offers specific suggestions for developing specific activities. Butler (1988) writes that assignments should be built on purposeful writing-to understand a problem, to capture a memory, to ease a pain, to explore a meaning, etc. He also writes that assignments should depend on the discovery within oneself to answers and promote sharing - not for correcting - but as a means of explaining the quest. These assignments should result in written products, perhaps a publication, and be evaluated on the basis of the student's commitment to the process, involvement in collaborative structures, and knowledge of

the writing process rather than qualitative assessments of single pieces of writing.

Developing Argumentative Skills to Improve Writing

Another area to review in relation to this paper's topic is the idea of developing argumentative skills to improve writing. In relation to this purpose, Schultz and Laine (1987) stated no specific hypothesis for research but referenced the hypothesis set forth in the National Assessment of Educational Progress's findings of 1969-1979. This hypothesis was that 17-year-olds have trouble supporting an argument and that mechanical errors are not the primary cause of the deterioration in writing skills among young writers.

The eleventh graders in this study responded to a stimulus requiring that a position be taken for or against limiting participation in extracurricular activities to students maintaining a "C" average. Students were to write a high school principal and were told writing time was limited to 30 minutes. Raters evaluating each student's ability to support an argument used a

> primary trait rubric based on
> Toulmin's system of argument
> in which a writer makes a
> claim, provides evidence to support that
> claim, and then provides warrants
> to demonstrate the relationship
> between the evidence and the
> claim (Schultz and Laine, 1987: 3).

Mechanics were measured by a standard four-point scale. The researchers monitored the training sessions, one for each trait, for interraters. Scoring sessions for supporting an argument yielded an 87 percent agreement. Scoring sessions for mechanics yielded an interrater agreement of 92 percent.

The researchers included a chart which reflected the contrasting abilities of these juniors as measured by two traits. Fifty-one percent of the juniors were unable to substantiate an argument. Seven percent received high scores for this skill. Twenty-seven percent of the essays lacked any mechanical problems. Only 10 percent of the juniors wrote essays that were mechanically deficient to the point of being unreasonable. The contrast of these data suggests that the high school teacher might expect that students would have greater strength in mechanics than in supporting arguments. Although mechanics are important, this study indicates that there are a number of specific needs to be addressed

by teachers of English. For example, the teacher needs to help students develop strong and effective arguments, focusing the student's attention on invention, arrangement, and style. Additionally, it demonstrates the need to help students think in terms of "appropriate" and "inappropriate" usage, not right or wrong usage. Finally, the study demonstrated the need to teach grammar in the context of a "designated rhetorical context" (Schultz and Laine, 1987: 7).

McCann (1989) investigated the relationship between a student's ability to develop an argument and writing skill using sixth, ninth, and twelfth graders as subjects. Ninety-five students participated in this study with the teacher/student ratios being 1:33 from grade six, 1:40 from grade nine, and 1:22 from grade twelve. The ninth and twelfth graders were students at a large suburban high school, with the sixth graders coming from one of the high school's feeder schools. College professors and members of the National Council of Teachers of English writing committee were also asked to respond to the same group of writing samples. Of the 60 adults who were contacted, 22 responded. The adults'

responses were used as a standard against which the students' responses were judged.

In the study seven passages that varied the presence of argumentative features were devised. Participants were asked to judge whether each passage as an argument rating it from 1 to 5. A rating of zero was assigned to all passages which participants decided were not arguments. Students were also asked to write about a topic which required argument as support. Raters of the compositions were trained to rate compositions from each grade level, using a score guide which, as in the aforementioned study, was base on the Toulmin model of argument.

To determine a total score for each composition, ratings under each category were combined. The interrater reliability was checked three times during scoring with the reliability factory of .825, using Pearson product-moment correlations.

One might expect that the twelfth graders would out perform the sixth and ninth graders consistently. This, however, was not the result. Ninth grade students scored higher in the two areas over both sixth graders and twelfth graders. The twelfth graders scored lower than

both the sixth graders and the ninth graders in one area. As would be expected, twelfth graders did a better job of writing arguments than students at the other levels.

Audience and Ownership Awareness as Tools of Composition Improvement

Several recent studies in composition theories conclude that composition must be viewed as a creative process which the writer designs for a particular audience. James Moffett, as quoted by Roen and Willey (1988: 75), writes that

> If anybody is going to do anything about the teaching of writing, the first priority is going to have to be the rekindling of the sense of audience. Until that's done, nothing else is going to happen.

Because no previous research had been done to examine the effects of audience awareness on writers as pre-writings were completed and revisions drafted, Roen (1985) conducted a pilot study that suggested that audience awareness is beneficial to student writers, specifically in revisions. Researchers, as a result, designed a study to determine how audience consideration effects student writing and at which stage of composition it is most effective. The research questions were: (1) Can giving

students a series of questions about audience for papers improve the overall quality of writing? and (2) Does it make a difference whether these questions are given during the drafting or revising stages of composing?

Sixty students enrolled in five sections of Freshman composition, the first composition course of a two-semester freshman composition requirement at the University of Arizona, volunteered for the study. These participants completed a written assignment that required students to write about a personal and familiar topic. Next, students were asked to consider peers as an audience. Then, a vague outline of the assignment's purpose was given. Fourth, the students were asked to use appropriate formats for purposed and topics. Finally, the assignment required the students to be aware of the essay's appearance.

In addition to a set of specific directions, all 60 students were given four questions which were to be answered in short written response. Twenty of these students were to answer four additional questions designed to help put the focus on audience while writing, to consider the knowledge base of the reader. A set of directions designed to guide all 60 students as revisions

were completed were developed. Four questions which focused on the directions were distributed to students. Again, 20 of the students were asked to write short responses to four additional questions, focusing on the audience's knowledge as revisions were made.

Roen and Willey (1988) randomly assigned the students to one of three treatment groups: (1) no audience questions, (2) audience questions, and (3) audience questions during revising. To guarantee that every student did review the assigned treatment, every student in the study wrote an answer to every question received. The investigators photocopied drafts and revisions after collection and returned revisions to the instructor the same day.

Using a six-point scale and scoring holistically, two experienced university professors evaluated the compositions, and these scores were combined to form a composite score which was statistically analyzed. Moderate interrater reliability for holistic scores wee indicated by Guttman split-half alpha coefficients on both essay versions, a = .65, and revised reversions, a = .75.

This study reflected a mean score of 5.30 with a 1.26 standard deviation for the treatment group that received no audience questions before composing the original version of the essay. For the group receiving the question before drafting the original essay, the mean score was 6.00 with a standard deviation of 0.83. These results did not reflect a significant difference among the groups. However, for the treatment group receiving no audience questions before the draft of the revision, the mean score of 5.40 with a standard deviation of 1.10 which is a significant contrast to the remaining two groups with mean scores of 6.15 and 6.75, respectively, and standard deviations of 1.23 and 1.33, respectively. These results indicated that for those in the treatment groups who were asked to pay attention to audience, either as they drafted or revised essays, the quality of the composition was significantly higher. These results supported previous studies done in the area of audience awareness in composition. The results of this study indicated that not all students are ready to consider the question of audience at the same point in the composing process. It is, therefore, significant that the teacher

interject the questions of audience at the point at which it would do the most good for the writer.

> In addition to consideration of audience as a writing task, . . . the literature suggests that student writers who are afforded opportunities to take ownership of their writing task seem to be more highly engaged with those tasks than those who are not (Spaulding, 1989: 141).

Spaulding's studies suggested that both control opportunities and goal-setting opportunities are crucial variables in predicting motivated human behavior. Spaulding's study (1989:141)

> . . .investigated the differential effects of ownership opportunities and instructional support on the writing task engagement of high school students reporting low- and mid- and high levels of writing self-efficacy. In addition, differences in teachers' abilities to provide students with ownership opportunities and instructional support were investigated.

The researchers studied 191 eleventh graders enrolled in six United States history classes in a suburban high school located in a major metropolitan area. All eleventh graders at the school, excluding honors students and non-mainstreamed special education students, were included in the study. Three teachers taught these classes with each being assigned two of the six classes. One teacher assigned the wrong topic, thus

eliminating that class of 33 students from the study. Ninety-two students were absent on one or more of the eight days of data collection and were, consequently, dropped from the study. Sixty-six students provided complete data for the study.

The researchers randomly assigned one of the six sequences to each of the classes. Other measures were also taken to ensure randomization of the study. Three instructional conditions were delivered to each subject in the study: ownership opportunities/no instructional support, instructional support/no ownership opportunities, and instructional support/ownership opportunities.

Spaulding (1989) used several different methods to collect the data of this study. Observation of and interviews with teachers were used to attempt to understand teacher variances. To assess student self-efficacy, a paper-and-pencil instrument was used. This provided an indication of how students perceived writing competence. The instrument required the subjects to indicate with a percent score between 0 and 100 confidence with various writing tasks included on the instrument. Students were rated as low-, mid-, and high-

levels of self-efficacy with a half standard deviation above and below the mean, 55.72 and 76.59, respectively. Eighteen students not involved in the study were administered the same instrument in order to estimate reliability. The test-retest which resulted had a correlation coefficient of .79. To establish correlation coefficients between the two sets, ratings for topic-knowledge organization (highly organized and partially organized) were calculated for each topic used. The time spent writing portions of this study was used an indicator of the students' persistence in trying to complete the task. Also, an assessment of student behaviors during actual writing time was made. The reliability factor here ranged from .80 to 90 and was determined by calculating the percentage of agreement between two observers gathering data simultaneously prior to the study in sample classrooms.

This study seems to suggest that students were most involved with writing assignments following a lecture and least engaged following no instruction. Teacher instruction for both content and procedures, then, proved to be the most important variable. Students seemed to put more effort into writing assignments with which the

teacher became actively involved in encouraging them to take ownership of writing.

McGuire (1987) conducted a study to establish the relationship between a student taking ownership of writing and writing improvement. The subjects of the study ranged in abilities from excellent to very poor, with most in the middle ranged. The researcher noticed three kinds of reactions to writing: anxiety, euphoria, and normal response. Those students who reacted anxiously to writing assignments never developed personal images as writers. Those in the euphoria group became actively engaged in writing, assuming responsibility for ownership. The final group, those with normal reactions, progressed and regressed. As time progressed, however, these young writers became "writers," not just "students trying to write" (McGuire,1987:35).

The researcher asserts the following conclusions:

1. Students told of personal experience in the students' own words.
2. Dealing with frustrations and growth experiences of writing effects the progress students make writing.

3. Self-awareness encouraged students to take control of writing. Student learned to rely less on the teacher (McGuire, 1987:35).

The controlling variable of this study seemed to mirror other study findings. Students who were encouraged to take ownership of writing showed a marked improvement in writing.

Evaluation Methods as Teaching Tools

Evaluation methods as teaching tools is another topic to be considered in studying possible techniques for use in the improvement of instruction in composition. Holistic evaluation, one specific method of composition evaluation, is a necessary topic for consideration when reviewing issues relating to the improvement of students' composition skills. Objective evaluation of writing is desired but often inherently difficult. Daiker's (1986) considered whether student essays produced a wide range of divergent assessments from trained raters. The study was conducted during the 1986 Early English Composition and Assessment Program in which evaluators judged compositions written under controlled conditions by high school juniors. The compositions were rated by high school teachers trained in holistic evaluation procedures

used by the Educational Testing service for scoring Advanced Placement examinations.

All papers were evaluated using a six-point scoring scale included in the study. The papers were evaluated on ideas, supporting details, unity, organization and style. Each of these criteria was defined for the raters.

After completing the training, readers began scoring essays while the researchers began looking for discrepant essays. First, those essays whose two holistic scores differed by three points or more on the six-point scoring scale were set aside. Then the researchers attempted to determine if the discrepancy in scoring was caused by a single reader who had not properly rated the essay. In most instances, the paper was not discrepant but was one on which the reader was not using the rating criteria and scoring scale properly. Finally, several papers were located that seemed discrepant even after third and fourth readings. These papers fell into one of three categories. Four papers from these categories were chosen and each of the 61 readers were asked to read each paper and complete a rater questionnaire on which each paper was assigned an holistic score and four analytic

scores. Then each rater responded to questions that the researcher hoped would explain the raters' scores. Analysis of the questionnaires relating to one paper confirmed what the first four readings had suggested. The paper evoked very different responses from those who looked at it. The question then arose as to what led to such significant differences in response. To answer this question, written responses in the rater questionnaires were analyzed. These analyses made it clear that there was a wide continuum of response to the central event of the student essay. This analysis also suggested a strong connection between emotional response and holistic scoring. The more the reader is moved by the essay's central event, the higher the holistic score it is assigned. "English teachers sometimes project their own 'mysterious self' upon the object they are reviewing" (Daiker,1986:137). The study confirms that evaluators using holistic scoring have a special obligation to insure fairness. It also confirms that every essay should be evaluated by more than one rater. However, the study also demonstrates that using raters does not guarantee fairness.

This study has several implications for the classroom. It suggests that the same discrepancies which occur during holistic scoring sessions occur in classrooms also, Discrepancies in scoring seem even more likely to occur when the rater knows who wrote the paper. The researcher asserts the conviction that writing instructors need to develop an appeals system for use in classrooms.

Butler (1988) writes that the teacher's purpose should be to be a leader among equals, to be a writer and a sharer of writing, and to be one voice among many in the evaluation process. One method of evaluation that Butler (1988) discusses is conferencing. He writes that it may be just a sharing of ideas for writing. It also may be between student and teacher, or among groups of three or more students. The conferencer is able to help writers to shape, clarify, and extend ideas through suggestions and questions. The shared responsibility for the final text reduces anxiety about writing. Butler suggests that the most important benefit of collaborative writing is the learning that takes place when students cooperate with each other and the weaker student benefits from the help from peers and teachers which this

informality makes possible. Sperling (1990) writes that research supports the premise that teacher-student conferences enhance the writing acquisition process.

Another study in which the importance of evaluation as a teaching tool was considered was conducted by Davis (1988). Davis conducted action research in which developing a classroom system designed to make us of error analysis in improving writing skills was considered. Davis's research spanned three years in a senior English class at Troy High School in Troy, Ohio.

The first year of the research period, Davis (1988) used a grammar textbook to teach this subject and discovered that this was not an effective way to consider the errors students were making in writing. As a result, Davis decided to try an alternative method. The first step the author took was to compile a list of faulty sentences actually written by students, then have students correct sentences as part of a unit on revision. After the sentences were revised, Davis discussed the errors found. The author asserted that this type of research can help teachers discover the range of errors students make. Students also took an interest in looking at the mistakes made by fellow students.

During the second year of the study, Davis (1988) began keeping cards listing errors students made in writing. These cards and lists help teachers understand exactly what needs to be taught. After preliminary research, Davis was interested in finding out the number and the kinds of errors students made in composition exercises. Sampling senior language skills classes and tabulating errors helped determine that the mean number of types of errors was six. Involving students in discovering and correcting errors was the most important goal for Davis's research.

To apply to this research to the development of "intervention strategies," Davis (1988) used one method of error correction. Students were given credit for correcting errors which had been circled in papers. Along with this method, Davis attempted to use the previously mentioned cards in a conference. These cards generated into individualized mini-lessons. During the individual conferences, Davis discussed the errors found in writing. This technique seemed to encourage students to correct errors.

Davis (1988) concluded that the main point of this research is that error analysis can be valuable to

determining student needs because students who need further instruction are focused upon. Additionally, students learning to correct errors result in the development of more responsible writers.

In grading and evaluation of writing, there exists a need to nurture the student coupled with the desire to stimulate students well. Blynt (1992) writes that as evaluators, teachers have to be able to see that there are acceptable, viable means of assessment in the form of contest entries, guest speakers, community input and response. "Going public" with a piece of writing is ever so much more difficult than stealthily handing it in to the teacher for a single reading and a meaningless grade. Having the courage to stand behind your words is a huge lesson. Learning it is a sign of growth. Blynt also suggest that bodies of student work can be used to rate student growth, productivity, and performance by means of pre-established criteria. As much creativity in the handling of loosely structured assignments as the student can comfortable accept should be allowed. Finally, Blynt writes that when the learning and writing are real, the importance of the grade diminishes. He suggest that evaluation comes in the form of honest response.

Unfortunately, too few students and teachers are open to the notion of real, rather than assignment, writing.

Peer Evaluation as a Learning Tool

McManus (1988) conducted a study using a tenth grade writing class in which peer group response was employed. In the study group activity was recorded on tape and students' comments were categorized and counted. These data were compared with the active revisions and changes which were made on successive drafts. Students in this class did revise, creating partners and reading before the beginning of the full group processing began. Of the revisions, 30.48 percent and 16.04 percent, respectively. To the researcher's surprise, over 11 percent of the group suggestions involved multi-sentence and text level revisions. The most significant finding referred to the number of suggestions for revision that writers chose to follow (89.47 percent). This study suggests that students want critical analysis of papers and do not car by whom papers are critiques. Peer evaluation provides what many students see as an important aspect of evaluation.

Liftig (1990), a veteran English teacher in the suburban district of Eastchester, New York, which had

recently completed a five-year conversion to a K-12 curriculum based on a process approach to writing, completed action research in which to incorporate peer evaluation, also, into students writing instruction, Liftig's ninth grade honors students generated story ideas in both individual freewriting and small groups. Under these circumstances these students tested stories against the "real" world of a peer audience. After narratives were drafted, students exchanged these with a partner, then edited the narratives for publication for two of Liftig's classes.

One of Liftig's (1990:62) purposes was to avoid the "sporadic, anonymous, and sometimes brutal commentary that had hurt feelings in previous classes". To avoid this condition, Liftig decided that the instructor and the students would move slowly. For this reason Liftig provided students with a four-question peer reaction worksheet which required both positive responses and the evaluator's signature on every page.

The stories were published, then reviewed over a three day period, with each student completing one peer review sheet for each of a minimum of 10 stories. Students were repeatedly reminded that comments had to be

positive and supportive. Using positive phrasing was new to some students and, as a result, students often slipped back into negative responses. After collecting the worksheets and in order to collect a formal analysis of what had occurred, Liftig (1990) then asked students to write essays containing four specific parts. By analyzing these essays, Liftig discovered similar, unexpected responses in five basic areas.

Liftig's process provided an authentic writing task within a social context appropriate to the process writing classroom. Students consider peer evaluation a provider of the most important aspect in writing evaluation. Peer evaluation provided "a general measure of the extent to which an author's aims are validated by audience" (Liftig, 1990:65). Additionally, positive phrasing is a technique by which evaluation can be completed without offending sensitive, young writers. However, even though students seem to want some critical response to writing, students seem to be reluctant to make the corrections. Liftig theorizes that this is for the same reasons that teachers are: Teachers are unfamiliar with the technique of positive phrasing and view it as relinquishing classroom authority.

Solution Strategy

Two classes of honors sophomore students who met with the author for 60 minutes five days weekly participated in this project. These students were allowed to work in collaborative groups on the assignments if they so chose. The class reconvened periodically for whole group discussions and considerations.

The required literature content for the course, along with supplemental selections, as indicated as effective methodology in studies, was used to develop the students' critical thinking skills, enhancing critical analysis of literature and developing interpretations of literature. Collaborative learning was also used to enhance the students' commitment to developing purposeful, well-developed writings. These groups were also asked to participate in developing activities and assignments for the literature studied. Research indicated that collaborative learning increased higher thinking skills.

As literature suggested, attention needed to be given to the students' abilities to recognize sound arguments and develop sound argumentative supports for

compositions. Attention was given to the recognition of sound arguments. Attention was also given to the art of persuasion along with the use of tone and reason to develop an argument. Attention was also given to procedures used in developing arguments, i.e., assumptions, definitions, premises and syllogisms. A checklist for analyzing an argument formulated by Barnet and Bedau (1993) was used for analyzing arguments. Literature suggests that developing skill in analyzing arguments enhances writing ability.

These students were also encouraged to take ownership of writing by formulating writing topics about or related to the literature studied, which was strongly suggested by researchers as essential to good writing.

For evaluation, both peer evaluation and conferencing were used with students being allowed to choose which assignments would be evaluated. Literature indicated that these methods of evaluation are effective teaching tools for improving writing.

The solution strategy was chosen because research literature indicated a clear connection between student involvement in literature selection and writing assignments as a key to improved writing. This strategy

also allowed the writer to focus on critical thinking skills and the county curriculum.

Although all of the research proved valuable to the implementation of this practicum, the research on cooperative learning was especially significance. Roen and Willey's research on audience awareness was also particularly useful. Liftig's research into peer evaluation proved most valuable, also.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

In order to create the writer's workshop atmosphere in the classroom, students were divided in groups of no more than four. Writing and critical thing ability levels were considered when grouping students so that the weaker students were with stronger students who could nurture development of skills. All writing assignments were generated from topics related to the literature studied in class along with selections from Time magazine and Literary Cavalcade. Writing topics did not need to be specifically related to the literature's theme(s) or subject matter. Each student completed six writing assignments. Of these at least three were peer graded. Four were chosen by the student for student-teacher conference evaluation. Class time was provided for group discussions of literature and peer evaluations of writing assignments. Credit was given for all writing assignments with the conferencing evaluations weighing

greatest. Students were asked to include as final writing assignments a composition which reflected most accurately the value of the writer's workshop. This writing project spanned a period of 12 weeks. The teacher assumed the basic role of roaming editor "sounding board." The teacher was available for individual or group conferencing whenever it was desired by students. The teacher circulated among the groups making certain that students remained on task.

Students were asked to consider specific literature from texts, e.g., Othello, from Literary Cavalcade, from special issues of Time magazine. The material was read orally, for the most part, as a whole class. Then groups were asked to re-read and discuss the selection. Using areas of focus as springboards, students were asked to formulate writing assignments for the selections. For example, using one issue of Literary Cavalcade, students researched the treatment of minorities, specifically Blacks, around the world. The literature in this issue was examined to determine its part in revealing the nature of racism. For example, this question was examined through an excerpt from Ralph Ellison's The

Invisible Man included in one of the issues of Literary Cavalcade.

At the outset of the workshop, students began research projects that were worked on concurrently with the aforementioned writing assignments. Students were allowed to use the media center during lulls in class writing assignments. These research projects were on topics of personal interest to individual students.

The following is a week-by-week implementation plan of what occurred during the writer's workshop.

WEEK ONE

Students were allowed to choose from four selections from the November/December 1992 issue of Literary Cavalcade: "The Imp and the Crust" and "Three Questions" by Tolstoy, "Captain of His Ship" by Bob Greene and "Is Everybody Happy?" by John Ciardi. After reading and discussing the selection, students chose from one of the following assignments for writing:

1. "The Imp and the Crust"
    a. Based on this fable, what kind of economic system do you think Tolstoy would have advocated? How does the story's moral relate to modern America?

b. Re-write Tolstoy's fable, making it a modern story.

2. "Three Questions"

a. Compare and contrast this fable with one or more fables from other sources, such as Aesop's Fables, Black Folktales by Julius Lester.

3. "Captain of His Ship"

a. Students were asked to think about someone with whom they had had contact whose dedication to an assigned task was personally impressive.

4. "Is Everybody Happy?"

a. Students were asked to respond to Ciardi's thesis in a paragraph. Students needed to agree or disagree with the thesis and develop a paragraph using specific examples to support contentions.

WEEK TWO

Students read the major articles from one issue of Time for consideration. The articles were used to

discuss the use of specific details, facts, and statistics in development of compositions. Students were asked to write a summary of either of the articles included in this issue.

WEEK THREE

After background discussion of A Tale of Two Cities, the opening sentence of the novel was used to initiate group discussions of its relevance to modern times. Upon completion of Book I, students were given the assignment to write a report of an incident from the book as if they were writing for a newspaper. They were reminded to give the most important facts - who, when, where, what, why - in the opening sentences. Then details could be added in descending order of importance.

WEEK FOUR

The first Literary Cavalcade selections, "Hand Upon the Waters" by William Faulkner, "The Case of the Missing Will" by Agatha Christie, "The Case for the Defense" by Graham Greene, and "The Stolen Cigar Case" by Bret Harte, were read orally and discussed in class with particular attention being given to questions that required critical thinking and reading by students. The writing

assignments for the week included giving students the following options.

1. Write a parody of your favorite mystery story if you have one.
2. Read the excerpt from Dickens' Bleak House. Using this excerpt as a model, create an extended metaphor of a natural phenomenon. Select one human situation that could be compared to a type of weather or another natural phenomenon. For example, compare a pleasant situation or experience to a breath of fresh air or a particularly devastating experience to a tornado or other severe storm. Use this comparison as the subject of an extended metaphor.

WEEK FIVE

Book II of A Tale of Two Cities was read and discussed. No writing assignment was given this week. Students were, however, working on research projects outside of class and, if time permitted, during class.

WEEK SIX

Students were asked to consider completing one of the following projects relating to A Tale of Two Cities:

1. Diagram the main plot and its subplots presenting work on a poster.
2. Examine chapter beginnings and endings in the novel. What insights are provided?
3. Trace the metaphorical development of the Revolution in the novel.

Each group was asked to choose one character for group analysis. The group listed everything known about the character, including appearance, mannerisms, best and worst characteristics, things that bother the students about the character, and behaviors that seem inconsistent or incomprehensible.

WEEK SEVEN

Groups chose from "The Day of the Bookmobile," a short story by Patricia McGerr, Trifles, a play by Susan Glaspell, and "The Worst of Times," an essay by James Reston. The following were possibilities for writing projects:

1. "The Worst of Times"
    a. Dickens begins his novel A Tale of Two Cities with the parody, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." Consider Reston's article and research the

decade of the sixties. How do you view this decade as it relates to this sentence?

b. Reston writes that "Keeping things in proportion has never been a common practice in the United States. Its literature, its advertising, its politics, its press, and even its private conversation didn't favor understatement but exaggeration." How do you think this applies in the nineties?

2. Trifles

a. Create a flashback scene for the play showing why and how the canary was killed.

b. Write a news story that appears after Wright's body is discovered.

c. Read Faulkner's "Hand Upon the Waters." In both this story and Trifles people who sympathize with a murderer keep quiet. Compare and contrast the two situations.

3. "The Day of the Bookmobile"

a. Retell this story from the viewpoint of Anne or the robber.

b. Rewrite and perform the story as a radio play - with sound effects.

WEEK EIGHT

Book III of A Tale of Two Cities was discussed. Questions relating to the text were phrased in order to elicit critical thinking by students. Upon completion of this book, students returned to groups to complete the character analyses began earlier.

WEEK NINE

Oral presentations of character analyses were scheduled. In addition, students were asked to choose one of the following for consideration.

1. Write on the nineties as "The best of times, the worst of times."
2. Interview a character. As a group, construct a list of questions to ask that character. Then write the interview, having the character answer all of the questions.

WEEK TEN

Groups were allowed to choose either Othello or Julius Caesar for reading. The class was divided into two large groups for consideration of these plays. Audio tapes of the plays were provided for listening. After

each act was completed, the class came together to consider questions of content and literary techniques. A parallel between general points of commonality was drawn during these discussions. Students were asked to suggest possible topics for writing. After a list of the possibilities for these assignments was compiled, students were allowed to group with other class members who had chosen the same topics.

WEEK ELEVEN

Group collaboration on writing assignments was allowed.

Consideration was begun for the March 8, 1993, or the March 1, 1993 issues of Time magazine. Students were allowed to group according to the issue to be considered. Exercises requiring critical reading and thinking were provided.

WEEK TWELVE

This week was a time for personal evaluations of works in portfolios through formal conferences with the instructor along with an evaluation of the effectiveness

of the workshop. Students were also allowed to complete any assignments which had not been finalized.

Students spent time in peer evaluation during this week. Evaluation forms were provided, and the completed forms were attached to the appropriate compositions.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The writing workshop's objectives were to improve the critical thinking abilities of students, to improve the quality of writing by these students, to bring about an improved attitude toward writing on the part of these students and to improve the students' abilities to construct essays which reflect critical thinking and originality of thought.

In order to evaluate the students' attainment of these objectives, a final writing project was assigned. The first objective was that after 12 weeks of practice in applying critical thinking skills, 80 percent of the target group would improve in ability to read an unfamiliar document and respond appropriately to questions included on a checklist for analyzing critical thinking abilities. This objective was met. At the end of the 12 week period, proficiency in critical thinking skills was assessed through use of a test on which passages from reading selections which were unfamiliar to the student were used. The test was modeled on sample

items presented in a model for assessment of proficiency in multiple thinking skills found in Barry K. Beyer's Teaching Thinking Skills: A Handbook for Secondary School Teachers. Eighty-five percent of the students involved received a minimum of 75 percent on the final assignment for a discrepancy of five percent.

The second objective required that after 12 weeks of writing practice 80 percent of the target group of sophomore honors English students would improve the quality of writing as evidenced by self, peer, and teacher evaluation using logs, records, checklists, and writing evaluation sheets which focused on content, organization, and other specific criteria, e.g., dialogue, character development, etc. At the end of the 12 weeks period 90 percent of the target group of sophomore honors students reflected improvement in the quality of writing. The assessment of this improvement was done through peer, self and teacher evaluation of a final writing project. This assignment was evaluated on the basis of organization, use of specific details and clarity of thought. This objective was met with a discrepancy of 10 percent. Evaluation of student portfolios was also used to determine if writing

abilities had progressively improved and if students had made sincere efforts to improve writing and critical thinking.

The third objective for this practicum required that over the 12 weeks period 60 percent of the target group of sophomore honors English students would demonstrate a 30 percent improvement in attitude toward writing as measured by differences in students' responses to the final student survey. The final student surveys were also issued to the students in order to derive their personal responses to the effectiveness of the writing workshop environment. These surveys were also used to determine if students' attitudes toward writing had altered (Appendix C:69).

Of the forty-five students who returned the student survey, most indicated favorable responses to the questions asked. Responses to the question that asked the student to indicate how they felt about learning to write indicated that 40 percent were very interested in learning to write, an increase of five percent over the results of the beginning survey. Also on this survey, 55 percent of the students participating indicated some interest in learning to write, increasing the percentage

by seven percent from the beginning student survey. Finally, five percent of students indicated no interest in learning to write, a decrease of 14 percent from the beginning student survey.

When responding to the question soliciting their feelings about the writing and reading assignments given during the workshop, nine percent found the assignments very interesting, while 60 percent found them only interesting. Twenty-nine percent of the students surveyed indicated that the assignments were dull.

The most interesting and encouraging result from the survey came to the question of whether students felt their writing ability had improved over the course of the workshop. Eighty-three percent of the students surveyed indicated that their writing ability had improved, with 16 percent indicating that their writing ability had not improved.

Of the techniques used during the workshop, 83 percent of the students chose collaborative assignments as their preference. Seventy-two percent of the students indicated that having more choice about what writing assignments would be completed was appealing. Twenty-nine percent also favored peer evaluation, while twenty-

five percent liked having more choice in the literature to be read.

This objective was met with a 10 percent discrepancy. At the end of the 12 weeks period 70 percent of the target group demonstrated a 30 percent improvement in attitude toward writing as reflected through responses to the final student survey which was administered at the culmination of the practicum. This survey was given to the students on the last day of the regular school year after they were reminded of the types of writing assignments which had been completed and of other methods of instruction which had been utilized. The author then left the classroom setting for about five minutes in order that students might not feel threatened by the author's presence. Students had been asked, also, not to include names on the surveys but to simply respond truthfully about what had taken place in the classroom during the period of the practicum.

The assessment of the students' ability to use specific details to support arguments was measured using the aforementioned final writing assignment. Students were assessed on their ability to provide specific information in support of main ideas. These specific

supports must have been clearly and logically incorporated into compositions. The details must have reflected the students' ability to recognize related primary and secondary supporting information.

This objective was that after 12 weeks 50 percent of the target group of sophomore honors English students would demonstrate a 30 percent improvement in ability to support arguments as measured by ability to provide appropriate supporting details. The assessment of the students' ability to use specific details to support arguments was measured using the aforementioned final writing assignment. This objective was met with a 25 percent differential. Seventy-five percent of the students met the criteria.

Overall, the writer was very pleased with the outcome of the practicum. All of the objectives were met. The writer's major concern was that the practicum might have been more effective had it spanned 16 to 18 weeks rather than 12 weeks.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS

The survey of peer teachers which was done at the beginning of the workshop indicated that these teachers also were concerned about the attitudes and abilities addressed in this proposal. With this in mind, a copy of the procedures followed and the results of the surveys administered to students will be made available to these teachers. Along with these procedures and results, copies of the student portfolios, with student permission, were made available to these teachers. The suggestion that sources such as Literary Cavalcade and the special issue of Time be used to supplement the adopted text was also made. These sources offer a variety of reading material to students as well as being sources of material which call for critical reading and thinking. The methods, materials, and results of this practicum will also be shared on a professional study day with other high school teachers of English and with the county supervisor of English. Suggestions for presentations are always welcomed, giving the author the opportunity to share the information included in this

practicum. Specifically, during the meeting of the honors English teachers, the techniques and the materials used, along with the results of the practicum, will be shared and discussed. However, since this writer does not think that either the materials or the methods utilized would work only with honors students, an effort will be made to share this material with teachers of the regular student and the skills student.

The program received a measure of success when its procedures were shared with teachers participating in an orientation preparing for a summer migrant institute. Not only were English teachers enthusiastic about the methods used, but teachers of other subject areas also found certain of the techniques shared valuable for use in their classrooms.

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A P P E N D I C E S

APPENDIX A

TEACHER SURVEY

TEACHER SURVEY

Please take time to complete this survey. Your help is greatly appreciated.

1. Are you satisfied with the critical thinking ability of your students?

   very satisfied_____ somewhat satisfied_____ dissatisfied_____

2. Is there evidence of critical thinking in your students' writing?

   yes_____ no_____ sometimes_____

APPENDIX B

BEGINNING STUDENT SURVEY

BEGINNING STUDENT SURVEY

1. How interested are you in learning to write?

   very interested_____ somewhat interested_____ not interested_____

2. How do you feel about the writing assignments you have completed this school year?

   _____I was greatly interested in them and feel that I understood their purpose.

   _____I found nothing in the literature that was worthy of writing about.

   _____I wanted to do a good job but was not sure how to go about doing so.

3. How would you suggest that the writing portion of the curriculum be improved? (Check as many as you desire.)

   _____Group work (Collaborative assignments)

   _____More peer evaluation

   _____More sharing of writing with class

   _____More student choice about writing material

4. Do you see learning to write as important?

   _____very important _____somewhat important

   _____a total waste of time

APPENDIX C

FINAL STUDENT SURVEY

FINAL STUDENT SURVEY

1. Having completed 12 weeks of a writer's workshop, how do you feel about learning to write?
   very interested_____ somewhat interested_____
   gaining confidence_____ still not interested_____
2. How do you feel about the writing and reading assignments which were given during this 12 week period?
   very interesting_____ somewhat interesting_____
   dull____
3. Do you feel that your writing ability has improved over the course of this workshop?
   yes _____ no_____
4. Which of the following most appealed to you during the workshop? Check as many as you like.
   collaborative assignments (group work)_____
   peer evaluation_____
   more choice about writing assignments_____
   literature choice____